

Amendments to the Claims

Claims 1, 7, 9, 10, 12 and 14 are amended and claims 19-26 are newly added. Thus, claims 1-26 are pending upon entry of this amendment. Changes to the claims are provided in the below listing of claims.

Listing of Claims

1. (Currently amended) A process for wet-chemical treatment of ~~treating~~ one side of silicon ~~wafers~~ wafers ~~in using~~ a liquid bath, ~~characterized in that~~ during which treatment the silicon wafers lay on conveyor means and the entire surface of the underside to be ~~underside of the silicon wafers is treated~~ is conveyed through or over liquid located in the liquid bath, wherein the conveyor means are positioned within the liquid bath, further wherein ~~without~~ the top sides ~~previously having been proteted or masked~~ of the wafers which are not to be treated are always positioned above the liquid.
2. (Original) The process as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the silicon wafers are processed continuously in a once-through process.
3. (Original) The process as claimed in claim 2, characterized in that the undersides of the silicon wafers are lowered into the liquid bath.
4. (Original) The process as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that as part of a production line the silicon wafers are conveyed horizontally through the treatment liquid located in the liquid bath.
5. (Original) The process as claimed in claim 4, characterized in that the liquid bath used is a tank whose peripheral edge is lower than the level of the treatment liquid.

6. (Previously presented) The process as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the edges of the silicon wafers are also treated.

7. (Currently amended) The process as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the treatment is an etching step and is carried out in a liquid composition which contains ~~NaOH~~ NaOH, KOH, HF, HNO₃, HF with O₃, and/or HF with oxidizing agent, ~~such as for example oxidizing acid.~~

8. (Original) The process as claimed in claim 7, characterized in that the oxidizing agent is an oxidizing acid.

9. (Currently amended) The process as claimed in claim 7, characterized in that the liquid composition contains at least one additive for binding the gases formed during the etching.

10. (Currently amended) A process for wet-chemical treatment of ~~treating~~ one side of silicon wafers using a liquid bath, during which treatment ~~characterized in that as part of a production line the wafers lay on conveyor means and are conveyed with the underside to be treated horizontally through or over a treatment liquid located in [[a]] the liquid bath, with the underside of the wafers being treated wherein the level of the liquid being contacted by the underside is maintained above the level of the bath surface not being contacted by the underside, further wherein the~~ without the top sides of the wafers which are not to be treated are always positioned above the level of the liquid having previously been protected or masked.

11. (Original) The process as claimed in claim 10, characterized in that the undersides of the silicon wafers are lowered into the liquid bath over the production line.

12. (Currently amended) The process as claimed in claim 10, characterized in that the silicon wafers are conveyed horizontally through the treatment liquid located in the liquid bath over ~~the~~ a production line.

13. (Original) The process as claimed in claim 12, characterized in that the liquid bath used is a tank whose peripheral edge is lower than the level of treatment liquid.

14. (Currently amended) The process as claimed in claim 10, characterized in that the ~~production line~~ conveyor means are provided in the form of belts or comprises a ~~comprises a~~ multiplicity of conveyor rolls.

15. (Original) The process as claimed in claim 14, characterized in that the conveyor rolls are in each case arranged on axle elements.

16. (Original) The process as claimed in claim 15, characterized in that each axle element is encapsulated in a fluid-tight manner with respect to the treatment liquid.

17. (Previously amended) The process as claimed in claim 10, characterized in that the edges of the silicon wafers are also treated.

18. (Previously presented) The process as claimed in claim 8, characterized in that the liquid composition contains at least one additive for binding the gases formed during the etching.

19. (New) The process as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the conveyor means are provided in the form of belts or conveyor rolls.

20. (New) The process as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the treatment is an etching, coating or cleaning step.

21. (New) The process as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the top sides of the wafers are not protected during treatment.

22. (New) The process as claimed in claim 10, characterized in that the silicon wafers are processed continuously in a once-through process.

23. (New) The process as claimed in claim 10, characterized in that the treatment is an etching, coating or cleaning step.

24. (New) The process as claimed in claim 23, characterized in that the etching is carried out in a liquid composition which contains NaOH, KOH, HF, HNO₃, HF with O₃, and/or HF with oxidizing agent.

25. (New) The process as claimed in claim 24, characterized in that the oxidizing agent is an oxidizing acid.

26. (New) The process as claimed in claim 10, characterized in that the top sides of the wafers are not protected during treatment.